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George Lukens Collins

Mr. President, I have the honor to present as a candidate for an honorary degree the Reverend George Lukens Collins, whose distinguished ministry has combined intellectual discipline with a unique talent for friendship and a forthright social prophetism.

Mr. Collins received the B.A. degree in history from the University of California, the M.A. degree in economics from the University of Wisconsin, and has done extensive graduate study in psychology at Wisconsin as well. Although he has had no formal theological training for his ministry, he is better informed theologically than most men who have. These broad intellectual interests give peculiar strength to an academic ministry spanning 40 years on three campuses—first at the Colorado School of Mines, presently at San Jose State College, and notably for 29 years at the University of Wisconsin. In each place he has become a valued friend and advisor to presidents and professors. More than that, his impact upon succeeding generations of students is partly attested by the extraordinary number of men and women in service professions of all kinds, and particularly in the Christian ministry, who identify him as the chief influence on their vocational choice. That impact is also attested, perhaps even more importantly, in ways that are measurable only in terms of the human spirit. In "Shorty" Collins, and in Evelyn Everett Collins, his companion and co-worker for 50 years, the shaken have found steadiness, the confused direction, the hurt compassion, and the fallen a healing acceptance. In the tradition of the social gospel, which early formed his own Christian commitment, he has also been a vigorous partisan of racial brotherhood, economic justice, and world peace—and he has worked publicly for these things when it was not popular to do so.

The high regard in which the Christian ministry at state universities has come to be held since its beginning some 50 years ago is due to the remarkable effectiveness of pioneering chaplains like George L. Collins. Therefore, on behalf of the Faculty of Kalamazoo College, I recommend that upon him be conferred the honorary degree Doctor of Divinity.